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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



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Mrs Sarah Wood
Headteacher
Waldringfield Primary School
Cliff Road
Waldringfield
Woodbridge
Suffolk
IP12 4QL

Dear Mrs Wood

Short inspection of Waldringfield Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 11 January 2018, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. The visit was the first short inspection carried out since the school was judged to be good in September 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the previous inspection.

You are an effective headteacher who leads a team of staff who are passionate about the school. Your school provides pupils with a stimulating curriculum which responds to their needs and interests. Parents value the school highly and the majority of them would recommend the school to another parent. One parent commented, 'The great sense of community running through the school, from both staff and pupils, makes Waldringfield very special.'

Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. They are respectful to both adults and each other. Pupils have positive attitudes to learning, are self-motivated and work hard in lessons. These are all contributory factors to the strong progress that they consistently make.

Governors know the school well. They work with you and your leaders to identify priorities for school improvement. The school's self-evaluation judgements are regularly reviewed in governing body meetings and are accurate. Governors' monitoring is effective. For example, their work with curriculum teams comprising a governor, a teacher and a teaching assistant, to evaluate each subject, helps them to have a good understanding of the quality of teaching and learning across the curriculum.

You are ensuring that children have a good start to school in Reception. Their workbooks show that they are making strong progress from their starting points. Additionally, the improvement in the teaching of phonics has resulted in younger pupils consistently exceeding the national average in the phonics screening check in Year 1 in recent years. As pupils move through the school, they are increasingly using their phonics skills well when spelling unfamiliar words.

You have worked hard to focus on the areas for improvement in the previous inspection which asked you to develop pupils' responsibility in their own learning. Inspection evidence shows that pupils are enthusiastically involved in their learning and are thinking about how they can achieve better. For example, they are able to articulate clearly why they choose specific challenges offered to them, considering their own starting points and what they need to do to improve.

Your evaluations of the school are accurate. They are informed by a secure range of evidence. You identify the need to further develop subject leaders' skills. Their effective use of assessment information to enable them to respond to inconsistencies in teaching and monitor pupils' progress more effectively is at a developing stage.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders, including governors, have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Records of concern are well organised and enable leaders to monitor pupils closely. There is a culture of safeguarding pupils where staff are vigilant and know what they should do if they have any concerns about a pupil.

Your procedures for checking the suitability of new members of staff to work with children are diligently maintained. Training is comprehensive, and meticulous records show the day when an update is needed for each member of staff. This ensures that staff always have up-to-date information about school policies and procedures for keeping children safe. When necessary, you work effectively with outside agencies to support pupils' needs.

Pupils of all ages told me they feel safe at school, and parents agree. Pupils know what bullying is and what to do if they have any concerns. Pupils know how to stay safe when on the internet and say this is because of lessons the school provides about e-safety.

Inspection findings

- At the start of the inspection, we agreed that I would look at how effectively leaders are improving pupils' progress in mathematics. This was because, even though pupils' standards in mathematics were similar to the national average in 2017, their progress from their starting points was less than expected.
- Pupils like mathematics and enthusiastically engage in the activities provided by teachers. Pupils' workbooks show that they make strong progress from their starting points from Reception to Year 6. Work is well suited to pupils' abilities,

including those with special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. Adults' probing questioning enables pupils to demonstrate their understanding and reasoning. For example, in a key stage 2 mathematics lesson, pupils had to explain how they converted decimal numbers to fractions. This was achieved successfully using accurate mathematical vocabulary.

- My second line of enquiry was about how leaders have been improving the teaching of writing so that pupils make faster progress. This was because writing was identified as an area for improvement at the previous inspection, and in 2017, progress at the end of Year 6 was less than nationally expected. Additionally, information published on the school's website identified historical variations in the attainment of pupils in writing across the school.
- Together, we observed teaching in classes which motivates pupils. Pupils make effective use of guidance from adults to improve their writing. They use success criteria, in the form of your chosen strategy of using 'chilli challenges', to evaluate their writing and to challenge themselves to improve their work. Pupils of all abilities enjoyed the opportunity to be the class 'Writer in Residence', where their writing was celebrated by the school, including in assemblies. When we looked at pupils' workbooks, we saw that writing is of a consistently high standard across the curriculum.
- When choosing work they were proud of, pupils showed me examples of high-quality writing which had been completed in other subjects, including, for example, in history, science and geography. Pupils also showed me how they use feedback from adults and guidance about the expectations for tasks to improve their grammar, punctuation and spelling. This is ensuring that pupils are applying their writing skills competently and accurately and, subsequently, making quicker progress.
- My final line of enquiry explored whether leaders are providing a broad curriculum which enables pupils to make good progress across a range of subjects. This was because the school had introduced a new curriculum in September 2016 and had made changes to arrangements for mixed-age classes at the start of this academic year. Additionally, science attainment in key stage 2 was lower than in other subjects.
- Pupils are highly motivated by their work across the curriculum. The pupils interviewed during the inspection were keen to show me examples of their work across a range of subjects. This included work about rivers and mountains in geography, dissections of a heart and lungs in science, and work and stories about the Tudors in history. The teaching of Latin in key stage 2 provides pupils with the opportunity to develop an understanding of word origins.
- Pupils enjoy the opportunity to work outside and use natural resources to make things. For example, Reception and Year 1 pupils made a pulley system to lift logs and older pupils made dens and decorations. The curriculum is further enhanced by 'Wow moments'. A recent example was the use of an inflatable planetarium in the school where pupils learned about space. Workbooks and the evidence of pupils' work on display show that pupils are making good progress across a range of subjects.

- You have recognised that further work is needed to improve the use of assessment in subjects other than English and mathematics. This will help subject leaders to identify strengths and weaknesses, and enable teachers to plan more effectively to meet the needs of pupils.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- subject leaders use assessment information more insightfully to identify whole-school priorities for improvement in writing and mathematics
- they continue to develop systems for monitoring pupils' progress in subjects other than English and mathematics so that subject leaders can identify where pupils make good progress and where it needs to be improved.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Suffolk. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Keith Pullen
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

You and I discussed the lines of enquiry for this inspection, the school's internal evaluation of its performance, plans for future improvement and information about current pupils' progress and attainment. Meetings were held with you and your governors, including the chair of governors and three of your subject leaders. I also spoke to a representative of the local authority on the telephone.

I gathered a range of evidence to evaluate the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. This included joint observations of teaching and learning in all classes with you. I looked at a sample of pupils' current work across all subjects and across a wide range of abilities in lessons and with a group of pupils. I spoke informally to a number of pupils in classrooms about their learning, and met more formally with a group of pupils to talk about their school experience. Policies and procedures for the safeguarding of pupils were examined, including mandatory checks made during the recruitment of new staff and case studies about referrals made to external agencies. A discussion was held with you as one of the school's designated safeguarding leads. The views of 50 parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, were taken into account. I also considered the views of parents who sent me emails during the inspection.